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ARCHIBALD C. DAVENPORT:
A BIOGRAPHY

BY
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SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

JUNE 1993

Scanned 2011 from The Savannah Biographies Volume 23

Special Collections. Lane Library. Armstrong Atlantic State University. Savannah, GA 31419-1997

ABSTRACT

Archibald C. Davenport was born in Savannah in 1819. He was the son of Isaiah and Jane Davenport. Archibald was a member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards and the Tattnall Guards. He served as a captain during the Civil War. Archibald served as Clerk of City Council for a few years. He was a banker and was employed by the Bank of Commerce and later by the Central Railroad Bank from which he retired. He married Jane Postell around 1870. The couple had no children. Archibald died on April 9, 1892 of a heart attack. He was buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery.

Archibald Davenport was a banker and confederate war veteran who spent his entire life in Savannah with the exception being the time he was in the army during the Civil War. He was very fond of the city and was active in the community. He married, worked, and was a devoted citizen in Savannah during the 1800s.

Archibald's life began in Savannah in 1819. The exact month and day were unable to be obtained. He was the son of Isaiah and Sarah Davenport. Neither were native Savannahians, but they met and were married in Savannah at the Independent Presbyterian Church.¹ Isaiah was a carpenter and builder who came to Savannah for his career. He was successful and built many buildings in the city. In 1820, he built the Isaiah Davenport House located on 324 East State Street, which today is a historical landmark.

Archibald was one of ten children. Archibald's father died in 1827 at the age of 43. He died during a yellow fever epidemic.² Sarah was left to take care of a large family and Isaiah's affairs. Isaiah left a will but this has been removed from the court's files. Sarah took care of her children by running boarding houses. Very little was known about Archibald at this time as he was only a child. Sarah was able to continue her boys' education. Archibald and his brothers were educated by a Mr. Bullough and a Mr. Phillips.³ There was no indication that Archibald received any type of college education.

Archibald did not appear in records again until 1836. This year marked the beginning of his involvement in military affairs. In 1836, at the age of 17, Archibald joined the Savannah Volunteer Guards which was originally organized in 1802.⁴ He was a member

for the rest of his life. In 1840, there was a sale recorded at the court house between Archibald and his brother Isaiah Davenport. On May 7, 1840:

Isaiah for sum of \$600 by Archibald C. Davenport present all and entire my household and kitchen furniture together with 1 saddle and bridle as per schedule annexed hereto. To have and to hold the said household and kitchen furniture and saddle and bridle unto the said Archibald C. Davenport, executor, administrator and assign to his and their only proper use and behalf forever and know the said, Isaiah Davenport, his heir, executor, administrator the said bargained premises unto the said Archibald C. Davenport his executor, administrator and assigns, from and against all persons shall and will warrant and forever defend by these presents. In witness where of I have hereunto set my hand and seal dated at Savannah May 7, 1840 and 64 after the year of the independence of the U.S.A.⁵

The selling of furnishings and household items was a common activity among the Davenport family. On July 12, 1856, Isaiah sells all all furnishings to Sarah Davenport for sum of \$300.⁶ Furniture was again exchanged on July 14, 1857. Sarah sells all furnishings to Hugh Davenport for \$240.15.⁷ Possibly some sort of financial difficulty was the purpose of these transactions. No exact reason was given.

Archibald devoted more of himself and time to the city. He served as City Clerk of Council from 1846 to 1848.⁸ At this time, Archibald was residing with his mother. He is listed as a member of Sarah Davenport's household in the 1850 Federal Census.⁹ His occupation was listed as inspector of customs. This was the only time this occupation was ever connected to Archibald. Archibald made his career in Savannah in banking. He left as City Clerk of Council in 1848. During this time Archibald was pursuing his career in banking. He was again involved with the council in 1855.

On January 12, 1855 it was recorded in the Daily Morning News: The city council met and proceeded to the election of city officers which resulted in ... Archibald C. Davenport becoming Clerk of Council.¹⁰ This was the last year Archibald was involved with the council or city government. The City Directories for the years 1858 to 1860 listed Archibald's occupation as teller at the Bank of Commerce. In 1858, he was residing at Quantock's Range on Taylor Street.¹¹ In 1859 his residence was listed as 87 Taylor Street near Barnard Street. This was the same for 1860.¹² During these years little information was available concerning Archibald's private life. Archibald was seeing a Miss Jane Postell during the 1850s.¹³ A lover's quarrel apparently ended the relationship.¹⁴

Things were beginning to become volatile in the United States between the north and the south. Archibald was eager to serve and protect the city in which he had spent his life. He was involved in activities in the city for the preparation of war. On January 3, 1861 Archibald was elected 1st Lieutenant of Company B of the 18th Battalion Georgia Infantry.¹⁵ The year 1861 was an active one for Archibald as far as military matters are concerned. On February 26, 1861 the Daily Morning News reported: At an election held at the Armory of the Savannah Volunteer Guards the following gentlemen were elected officers for Company A and B. Company B ... A. C. Davenport, Captain.¹⁶ The Daily Morning News for November 9, 1861 reported: At a meeting held this day at the Court House for the purpose of forming a volunteers company for immediate service, the following men signed the roll ... A. C. Davenport.¹⁷ Archibald was one of

many who signed the roll. Within a couple of days the Tattnall Guards was formed. This was a new volunteer company which was organized for home defense, but afterwards mustered into the confederate service and attached to the 1st Georgia Regiment.¹⁸ This regiment was doing duty at Fort Pulaski but the Tattnall Guards were doing duty at the Barracks in the city.¹⁹ Archibald played an important role in organizing the Tattnall Guards. On November 12, 1861 the Daily Morning News reported: At an election last night for commissioned officers of the Tattnall Guards, under supervision of Justice Staley, the following gentlemen were elected ... A. C. Davenport, captain.²⁰ Davenport apparently remained in the city for the remainder of 1861 and most of 1862. On October 23, 1862 the Daily Morning News reported: " We are authorized to announce Captain A. C. Davenport, as a candidate for Lieutenant Colonel of 1st Volunteer Regiment of Georgia in place of Major John Foley who declines to qualify."²¹ Archibald remained with the Guards for the duration of the Civil War. By 1863, Archibald was serving Captain at Morris Island, South Carolina.²² Archibald's company was involved in combat. Captain Davenport was mentioned in a letter to a Captain W. F. Nance from Headquarters at Battery Wagner. The letter detailed orders carried to Captain Davenport by a Lieutenant Hopkins of Company G. Davenport was to detail three gun detachments from his command and lead them up. One was killed by shrapnel while carrying out this order.²³ Archibald had a number of men under his command. For August 12, 1863 the strength of Davenport's unit

was listed as approximately 173 total. By the next day, this had dropped to 155. On August 15, 1863 the effective of his troops was 151 men.²⁴ These numbers were decreasing probably because of combat and disease. No official records were available after this time concerning Archibald's activities in the war.

Archibald returned to Savannah after the war. His life seemed to basically return to normal. Archibald resumed his career in banking. In 1866, he accepted a position as clerk at Central Railroad Bank and was living at Number 5 Taylor Street on the North Side.²⁵ In 1867, Archibald's occupation was listed in the City Directory as Assistant city treasurer.²⁶ This was the only reference found anywhere to this occupation.

Archibald was involved in very few legal matters in the city. On May 15 1866 Archibald served on the Grand Jury of Superior Court Judge Honorable William B. Fleming.²⁷ Archibald was called on at other times to serve on juries. Archibald was summoned as a grand juror for the February term of Chatham County Court and made default. He was fined \$40.²⁸ This was announced in the Daily Morning News on April 2, 1867. Archibald was executor for a Miss Ann Mosell and gave notice in the Daily Morning News: "... all persons Having claims against the estate of Ann Mosell will present them with in the time prescribed by law; and all indebted to said estate will make payment."²⁹ The exact relationship between Archibald and Ann Mosell was not described.

Archibald's routine seemed to remain the same. In 1870, he was paying teller at Central Railroad Bank and living at 110 Jones Street.³⁰ Archibald and his former sweetheart, Miss Jane Postell, had become involved again. 1870 is the approximate year when they were married. No official record of the marriage was on file at the court house in either name. The couple moved around a few times before they settled in 1881 at 98 Taylor Street. Archibald and Jane never had any children. No reason was found for this. It was possibly because the couple married somewhat late in life. Jane was approximately 44 years old when they were married.

Archibald remained active in the community and with work. He was still a member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards and was made Orderly Sergeant on September 19, 1872.³¹ The Savannah Morning News for August 12, 1875 reported: "The articles deposited in the corner stone of the Wesley Monumental Church are: ... by A. C. Davenport- one \$100 confederate bond."³² Davenport stayed at his position of paying teller at Central Railroad Bank until early 1892. In early 1892, he retired due to failing health.³³ Archibald was not used to being inactive and this inactivity had an effect on him. Archibald had always been healthy and had been able to remain at his post during past yellow fever epidemics.³⁴

Archibald Davenport died on April 9, 1892. The Savannah Morning News for April 10, 1892 reported in his obituary: "He dies from heart disease while talking to his family."³⁵ The day of Archibald's death began as a routine one for him. He

arose early took his customary walk downtown stopping by the Central Railroad Bank and the post office.³⁶ Archibald returned home in the afternoon and died at approximately 2 p.m.³⁷ Dr. Duncan and Dr. Chisolm were called to him but were unable to save him.³⁸ Archibald was 74 years old at the time of death. The cause of death was heart disease brought on by old age. Davenport's funeral was held at the Independent Presbyterian Church where he was a member but not a regular attendant.³⁹ He was buried April 10, 1892 in Laurel Grove cemetery.⁴⁰ The Savannah Volunteer Guards battalion attended the body.⁴¹ Archibald was buried in lot 204 at Laurel Grove. A Confederate States of America Iron Cross was placed by the grave. A trip to the cemetery revealed that Archibald was buried in the same plot with his mother Sarah R. Davenport. No other family members were buried with them.

Archibald was survived by his wife Jane and several other relatives.⁴² Archibald did not have a will on file at the court house and there was not a will listed in the indexes. According to her grave Jane Davenport died later in the same year on December 11. She was buried next to Archibald. Jane was 56 years old when she died.

Archibald's name appeared in the news some eight years after his death. The reference is in relation to his duty during the Civil War. A Colonel William S. Basinger of Athens writes on the Savannah Volunteer Guards Battalion. He insists that Captain A. C. Davenport was never Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment. Colonel Basinger made it known that he felt himself to be an unquestionable authority on the matter. Basinger pointed to the fact that Davenport

could not have been a lieutenant in the Guards and in the regiment. It was a rule that one could not be both.⁴³ Perhaps there was a discrepancy between his service with the Savannah Volunteer Guards and the Tattnall Guards. Regardless Archibald Davenport fought for what he believed right during the Civil War.

EPILOGUE

Archibald C. Davenport was from a well known family in Savannah. He appeared to have been an upstanding citizen and he was involved in different in the city. Perhaps more research could be done on his marriage. Davenport was also listed in the index of the census for 1870 but could not be located in the raw census. He appeared very little in official records.

Archibald had many relatives. There is a surviving relative in Savannah. The relative is Judge Lionel Drew. His great grandmother was Cornelia Davenport which was one of Archibald's sisters. Judge Drew was telephoned but could provide no information Archibald Davenport. Archibald had a nephew of the same name which was Hugh M. Davenport's son . This caused some confusion but dates generally made clarification easy.

NOTE

the following sources were researched but proved fruitless:

Marriage license
Estate records
Wills
Manuscript collections
1870 Federal Census

SAVANNAH, GA.

This Certificate, after being accurately filled, must be taken to the office of the Health Officer. Physicians are requested to be full and explicit in their statements. No interments will be allowed under any circumstances without written permit from the Health Officer.

I **Do hereby Certify** that **Leah A. G. Gannett**
 Aged **94** years, **10** months, **24** days, **1892**
 Died on **9th April**
 Cause of Death **Senile Degeneration of Heart**
 Died at **147 W. 1st St. Savannah, Ga.**
 Nativity **Savannah, Ga.**
Wm. J. Gannett M.D.

Physicians are at liberty to use the back of this Certificate if their statements cannot be confined upon its face.

NOTES

1. Mays, Susan, "Isaiah Davenport: A biography", (Savannah, Georgia, 1992), page 7.
2. Ibid., 27.
3. Ibid., 28.
4. Smith, Gordon B., "Gordon B. Smith Files", (Georgia Historical Society), A-G, (Names listed alphabetically).
5. Index to Deeds, Etc. A-E, Grantee, 1785-1910, (Savannah: Chatham County Courthouse), Book 22, Folio 213.
6. Ibid., Book 3P, Folio 382.
7. Ibid., Book 3Q, Folio 368.
8. Gamble, Thomas. Gamble History of the City Government. (Savannah, Georgia: Gamble, 1900), vol. 24, "Annual Report of the Mayor".
9. Census of Chatham County 1850, (Compiler: Otto, R. H., 1975), page 24.
10. Daily Morning News, 12 January 1855, page 2, col. 1.
11. City Directory of Savannah 1858.
12. City Directory of Savannah 1860.
13. Savannah Morning News, 10 April 1892, Obituary, col.2.
14. Ibid., obituary, col.2.
15. Smith, Gordon B., "Gordon B. Smith Files", (Georgia Historical Society), A-G.
16. Daily Morning News, 26 February 1861, page 2, col. 1.
17. Daily Morning News, 9 November 1861, page 2, col. 1,2.
18. Waring, Martha G., ed.. "Reminiscences of Charles Seton Henry Hardee," Georgia Historical Quarterly. 12: (3) page 258.
19. Ibid., 258.
20. Daily Morning News, 12 November 1861, page 2, col. 2.
21. Daily Morning News, 23 October 1862, page 2, col. 2.

22. War of the Rebellion. Series 1, vol. 28, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), page 467.
23. Ibid., 471.
24. Ibid., 494.
25. City Directory of Savannah 1866.
26. City Directory of Savannah 1867.
27. Daily Morning News, 15 May 1866, page 1, col. 1, 2.
28. Daily Morning News, 2 April 1867, page 2, col. 5.
29. Daily Morning News, 7 July 1866, page 2, col. 7.
30. City Directory of Savannah 1870.
31. Savannah Morning News, 19 September 1872, page 3, col. 3.
32. Savannah Morning News, 12 August 1875, page 3, col. 7.
33. Savannah Morning News, 10 April 1892, obituary, col. 2.
34. Ibid., col. 2.
35. Ibid., col. 2.
36. Ibid., col. 2.
37. Ibid., col. 2.
38. Ibid., col. 2.
39. Ibid., col. 2.
40. Laurel Grove Cemetery, Savannah Georgia 1853-1938. A-F.
Compiled by workers of the W. P. A. 1939.
41. Savannah Morning News, 10 April 1892, obituary, col. 2.
42. Ibid., col. 2.
43. Savannah Morning News, 23 December 1900, page 3, col. 5.

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